



CONCRETE SAFARIS

2019 Annual Report

Youth Transforming the World,
Starting in Their Own Backyards

concretesafaris.org

A Letter from the Chair & Executive Director

Friends,

It's hard to focus on 2019 when 2020 has been so difficult for all of us, and especially for youth and families in East Harlem.

In 2019, seventy-five percent more children and youth played, gardened, and explored the outdoors in East Harlem on a daily basis while engaging thousands of community members during the spring, summer, and fall through the City Surfers after school and Outdoor Leadership Academy. Youth learned new outdoor and life skills, noting that their communication skills were most impacted by our programming followed by increases in independence and self-esteem.

In 2020, it is expected that fewer youth will participate, while those that do attend will do so more often through our education, play, and exploration programming engaging community through social distancing in our gardens and neighborhood open spaces. Our focus on public health and environmental justice has never been more important than now.

We invite you to be a part of our adventures, where the youth of East Harlem transform their world, starting in their own backyards.

In Health,



Mac Levine, MPH
Founding Executive Director



Mandy DeRoche
Chair, Board of Directors



Our Mission

Concrete Safaris' mission is to prepare youth in East Harlem and beyond to lead healthy lives and shape their environment through outdoor education, play, exploration, and community engagement.

Our Values

These Values are the **RULES** that guide our programs. (See our RULES, at right.)

Each child, youth, and parent or guardian signs a contract prior to participation indicating that s/he will make Concrete Safaris a place where everyone can feel safe and nurtured.

R

Respect +
Responsibility

U

Uniqueness:
Being Your
Best Self

L

Listening,
Learning +
Leadership

E

Exercise,
Eating Healthfully
+ Energy

S

Sharing +
Safety

!

Fun +
Friendship



Concrete Safaris' 4 key programs

1



City Surfers

The City Surfers After School program's primary goal is to **improve the health and fitness** of East Harlem children. City Surfers currently engages 72 children for 15 hours each week from PS 57 and PS 182 in East Harlem.

2



Outdoor Leadership Academy

This year, over 200 youth (ages 14 - 24) participated in this 6 to 25-week internship program. The program's goals are to **expose youth to environmental health employment opportunities, develop their leadership skills, and involve them in leading the local community in healthy activities.**

3



Green Exercise Days

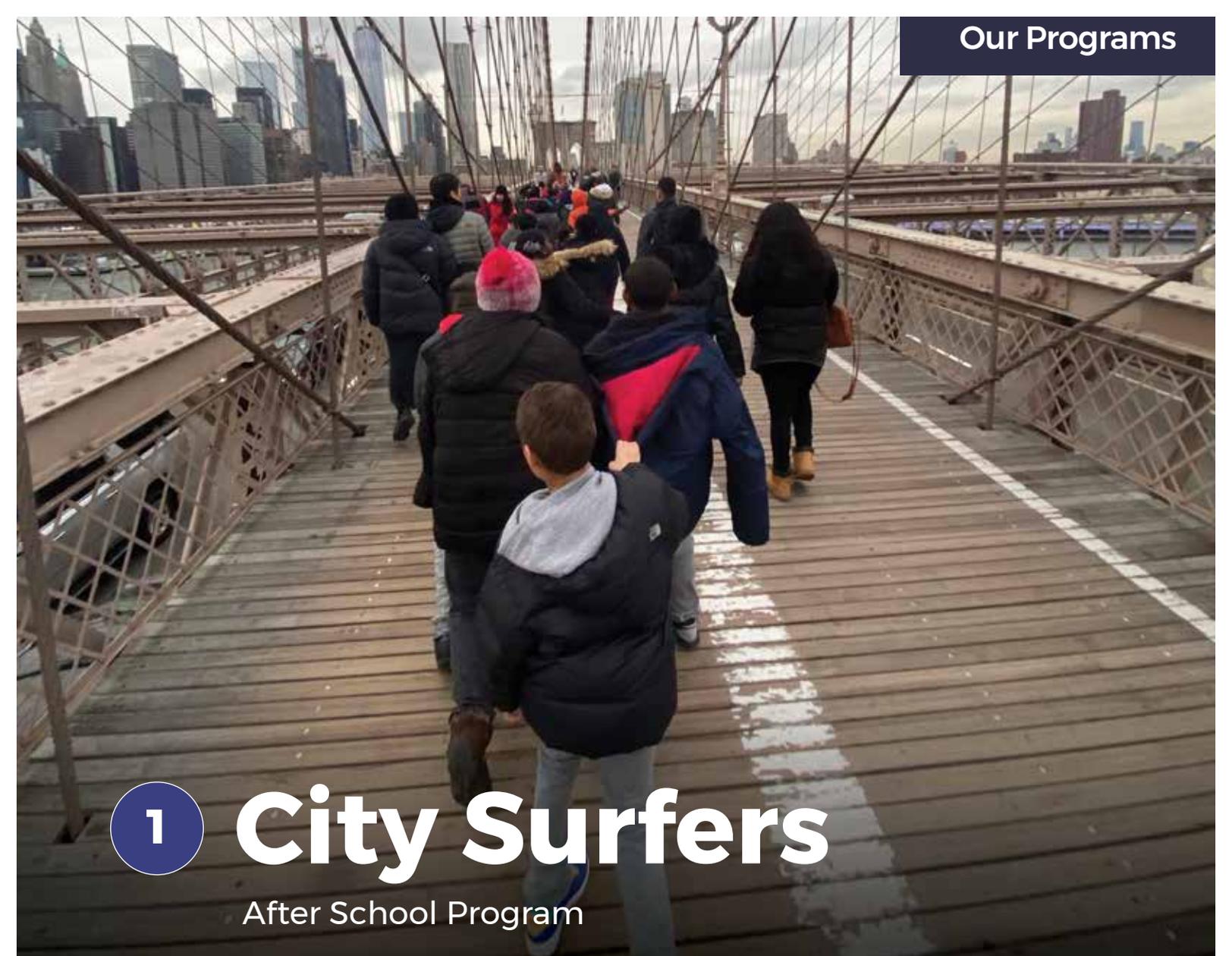
More than 18,000 second to fifth grade children have participated in garden-based field trips, held from Earth Week through Thanksgiving, that involve **gardening, urbanism, outdoor play & exercise, and environmental health.**

4



JungleGym

Through this annual activity, held in East Harlem, elementary school children and 14-24-year-old interns **transform outdoor spaces not traditionally used for play.** Children participate in obstacle race design, construction, promotion, and healthy competition. Youth learn how to lead the events.



1 City Surfers

After School Program

Improving the health and fitness of East Harlem children

In 2019, 84 City Surfers:

- gardened
- cycled
- took photos & held an exhibition
- went on field trips & nature adventures
- promoted JungleGym

Thank you to our partners!

- New York State Health Foundation
- NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
- NYC Department of Youth & Community Development
- Office of Council Member Diana Ayala

2

Outdoor Leadership Academy

Developing leadership skills and environmental health employment opportunities

In 2019, 14-24-year-olds gained skills and knowledge.

- 206 youth participated in a 6-week experiential education-based internship program.
- 15 youth completed 25-week school year internships
- All youth participated in 1-3 hours of weekly professional development sessions in financial literacy, leadership, professionalism, family planning, and other topics
- Weekly 1 - 1.5-hour professional development sessions during the school year

Outcomes

- 10,788 Internship hours for 14-15-year-olds that generated nearly \$103,850 in summer stipend income for OLA interns

Thank you to our partners!

- Boriken Health Center
- Columbia University
- El Barrio's Operation Fightback
- Family Health Center of Harlem
- Getting Out & Staying Out
- Guardian Life Insurance Company
- Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
- JRM Construction
- Museum of the City of New York
- NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
- NYC Department of Youth & Community Development
- NYC DOT
- NYC Housing Authority
- New York County Office of the District Attorney
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- SCOR Reinsurance
- Verizon Media



Cohorts included:

- **Outdoor Play** - Leading weekly JungleGym events for the community.
- **Gardening** - Growing and distributing food, beautifying urban open spaces, and leading groups of all ages in garden-based programming.
- **Health Promotion** - Photographing community initiatives led by youth and hosting an exhibition, and conducting a safety perception survey and presenting results to the NY County District Attorney's Office.

Additionally, youth:

- were linked to external health, educational, and professional development services on an as-needed basis
- went to Bronx Community College, The City College of New York, CUNY Queensborough College, Hostos Community College, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Pace University, St. John's University, SUNY, SUNY Albany, SUNY Binghamton, and UC Berkeley.

95%

of young people demonstrated gains in at least one Career Readiness capacity.

74%

of young people reported leaving the program with good or great Career/Workforce knowledge.

3

Green Exercise Days

Connecting youth with gardening & health

CS hosted 2nd-5th graders from NYC School District 4 at our gardens, Mad Fun Farm at Washington Houses and Jefferson Gardens at Jefferson Houses. There, youth learned about:

- **the connections between city infrastructure, healthy eating, and green space.**
- **conducting research on what changes they and the community wanted to see in the gardens.**

In 2019, eighty PS 155 students also visited Jefferson Gardens weekly as a complement to its science activities because the school lacked a science teacher and space for lessons.

Additionally:

- **16 community garden volunteer sessions** were held on Saturdays.
- **3 community dinners** were held in our gardens.



Thank you to our partners!

- NYC Housing Authority
- Public Schools 7, 57, 83, 115, 155
- Dream Charter School
- Trevor Day School
- Bartlett Tree Experts
- Deloitte & Touche
- SCOR Reinsurance Company
- American Institute of Architects
- Open Architecture / New York
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

4

JungleGym

Transforming outdoor spaces for play

Led by **Outdoor Leadership Academy interns & volunteers**

Each year, elementary school children and 14-24-year-old interns transform outdoor spaces not traditionally used for play.

In 2019, youth and families participated in obstacle race design, construction, promotion, volunteerism, and healthy competition.

The Active Living Fair included games, arts & crafts, bouncy houses, face painting, the FDNY fire safety and hat giveaway, health promotion booths, backpack and school supply giveaways, and more!

JungleGym, a NYC Weekend Walks Event Series Sponsored by Tahl Propp Equities, in Commercial Corridors

Four 2-block events:

E 106th & 116th Streets, Fifth and Park Avenues & Lexington - Second Avenues for 5,500 neighbors in July, August, & November.

JungleGym for NYC Housing Authority's Family Days in partnership with the Carver Houses Tenants' Association

Concrete Safaris co-hosted Carver Family Day on East 102nd Street for 300 residents.

Jungle Gym For School: Outdoor Play in Schoolyards

Six hundred students and their families celebrated end-of-year and back-to-school events in East Harlem at PS 57 and in Washington Heights at PS 115M.

Thank you to our partners!

- Boriken Neighborhood Health Center
- Citi Bike
- El Barrio's Operation Fightback
- FDNY
- Harlem Art Collective
- The Mount Sinai Hospital System
- NYC Community Board 11
- NYC DOT's Weekend Walks Program
- NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
- NYC Department of Youth & Community Development
- NYPD's 23rd and 25th Precincts
- Tahl Propp Equities

BIG WINS

IN 2019

The **Outdoor Leadership Academy** became one of the nine NYC Department of Youth & Community Development's Community-Based Summer Youth Employment Program Providers in Manhattan.

City Surfers became a School-Age Child Care Provider at PS 57, opening an after school program for 72 children thanks to support from the New York State Health Foundation.

Concrete Safaris was the only Upper Manhattan partner selected to deliver a **NYC Department of Transportation Weekend Walks program** in 2019, closing 8-blocks of commercial corridors for family-centered, outdoor play and health education activities.

STAFF



Mac Levine, MPH

Founding Executive Director

Ms. Mac manages operations and leads the team with her strong vision of experiential education's power to help children grow as healthy leaders.



Claire Farnan

Garden Educator + Project Developer

Ms. Claire educates children, youth, and the community about urban agriculture and food justice at Jefferson Gardens and Mad Fun Farm.



Christopher Hartsfield

Programs Manager

Mr. Chris manages all four programs, ensuring that children and youth learn, play, and explore safely in the great outdoors of East Harlem.



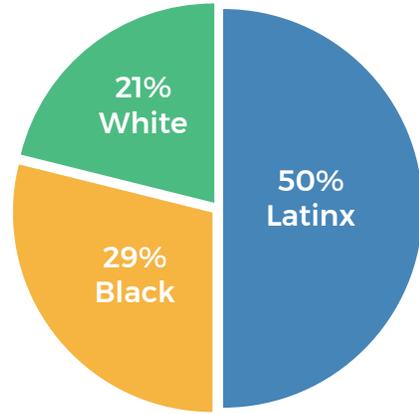
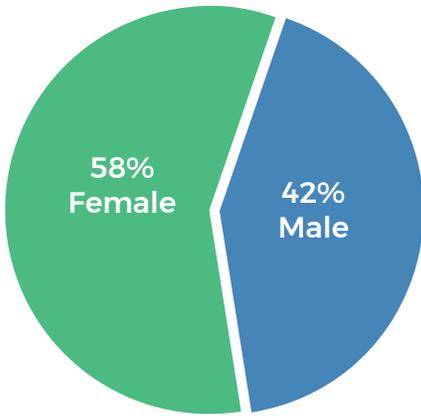
Phylisha Villanueva

Education Coordinator

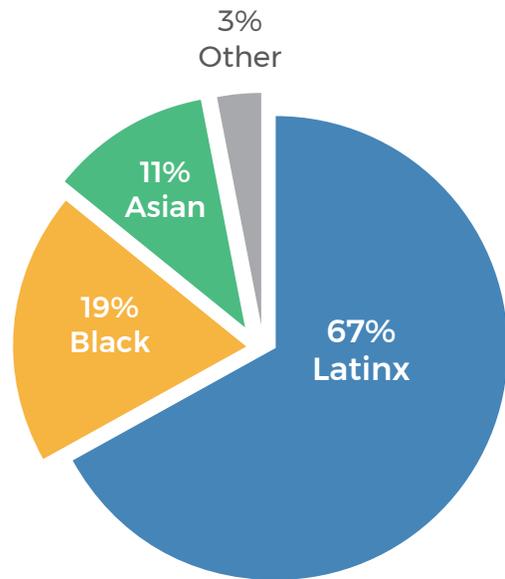
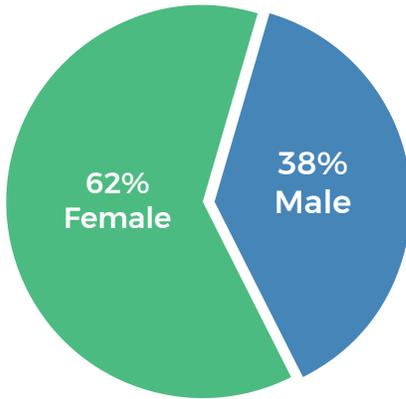
Ms. Phylli ensures that every participating child, youth, and family has access to educational, professional, and health-based opportunities.

CONCRETE SAFARIS 2019 DEMOGRAPHICS

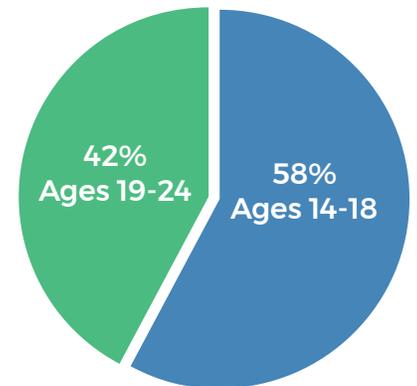
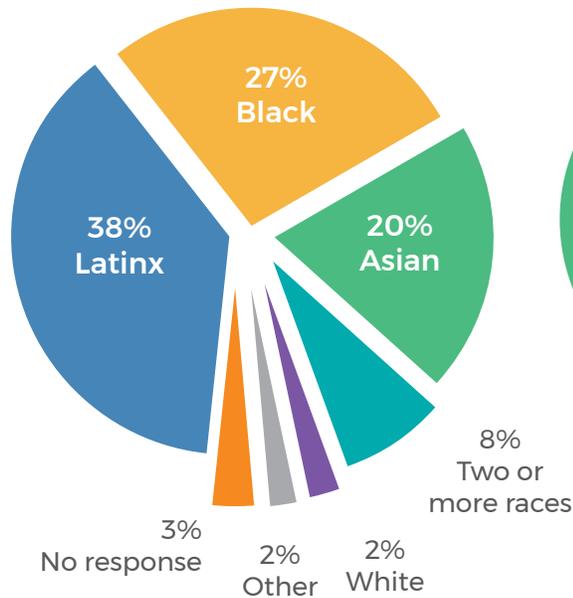
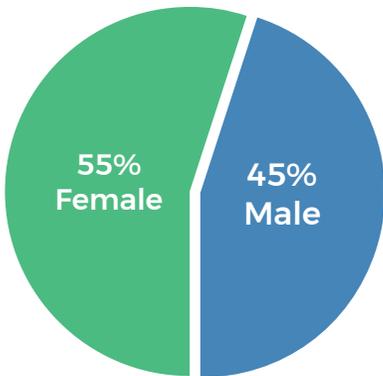
Staff



City Surfers



Outdoor Leadership Academy Interns





OUR PARTNERS

Schools

Lead Public Schools: 57, 155 and 182
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai
Northeastern University

Government

FDNY
Manhattan Borough President's Office
Manhattan Community Board 11
NY County Office of the District Attorney
NYC Department of Health
NYC Department of Transportation
NYC Department of Youth
NYC Housing Authority
NYPD
NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Office of Council Member Diana Ayala
Office of NYS Assemblyman Robert Rodriguez

Foundations

Merck Family Fund
The Morrison & Foerster Foundation
New York State Health Foundation

Non-Profit Organizations

Appalachian Mountain Club
The Association to Benefit Children
Exalt
El Barrio's Operation Fightback
Getting Out & Staying Out
Harlem RBI
New York Cares
New York Common Pantry
Open Architecture / New York
Partnership for After School Education
Union Settlement Association
Youth I.N.C.

Corporations

Blumenfeld Development Group, Ltd.
Deloitte
Goldman Sachs
The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America
HQ Capital
SCOR Reinsurance Company
South Shore Paddleboards
Verizon Media

Individuals

1,112 volunteers donated their time in 2019.



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CONCRETE SAFARIS

GET INVOLVED

Concrete Safaris, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, operates thanks to the generosity of individuals, corporations, government, and foundations.

Make a 100% tax-deductible donation in support of youth transforming the world starting in their own backyards.

Your donation is 100% tax-deductible.
EIN 204976317

CONTACT US

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Photos were taken by City Surfers and Outdoor Leadership Academy Interns.